

Introduction

The Harrison and Washington Park neighborhoods are distinct areas, but are being combined into one plan to facilitate completion of plans throughout the city. The Harrison neighborhood is bounded by Orange Avenue on the north, by Moorman Road on the south, by Fifth Street on the east, and by Fourteenth Street on the west. The neighborhood provides the opportunity for traditional historic neighborhood living. Washington Park is defined as the area bounded on the north by I-581, on the south by Orange Avenue, on the east by I-581, and on the west by Tenth Street. The area offers a traditional neighborhood setting in addition to several multifamily developments.

This plan is a component of Vision 2001-2020, Roanoke's 20-year comprehensive plan. Vision 2001-2020 recommends the development of neighborhood plans in order to provide a more detailed assessment of the neighborhoods and to provide a guide for future decisions. This plan identifies significant issues that need to be addressed in the future. Discussion is organized into the following six elements:

- Community Design
- Residential Development
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Public Services
- Quality of Life



Planning Process

Planning staff conducted a detailed study of current neighborhood conditions such as land use patterns, housing, and infrastructure. Residents were involved with the development of the plan through workshops and draft reviews. This plan is a reflection of participation from residents, neighborhood stakeholders, and City of Roanoke Planning staff. Citizen participation through meetings, phone calls, and email was a valuable part of the neighborhood planning process.

Community Issues

The major issues identified through the process include:

- Aging housing
- Code enforcement
- Large numbers of low-income, multifamily units
- Compatibility of infill development
- Tenth Street improvements

Priority Recommendations

This plan makes recommendations for neighborhood improvement and development. Most recommendations are for action over a 5-year period, while some recommendations are longer term. Major recommendations include:

- Encouraging a balance of housing choices in all price ranges and housing options that promote social and economic diversity
- Promoting general physical enhancement through continued code enforcement efforts
- Adopting the Neighborhood Design District to encourage compatible infill housing
- Improving the appearance and function of major streets

A goal of the planning process was to involve the community in determining its own future. While city government will be a major participant in implementing this plan, citizen involvement will be essential. Harrison and Washington Park residents must take an active role in neighborhood improvement, cooperating with City departments, monitoring progress, and getting involved in implementation.

History

Harrison and Washington Park are historically single-family neighborhoods. However, the neighborhoods have seen some increases in commercial and industrial uses. In the Harrison neighborhood, most of the homes were built between 1900 and 1920. Many of the original homes are still standing and contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood. The Washington Park neighborhood experienced new development between 1920 and 1960. After World War II, many people settled in the northwestern area of the neighborhood.

Development Milestones

- In 1914, Harrison School was built as the first school for blacks in the Roanoke Valley.
- In the 1920s, a small commercial area developed on Moorman Road and Fairfax Avenue.
- Lucy Addison School was built in 1950 to accommodate the growing population.
- Washington Park was used as a landfill in the 1950s. It was capped and the park was established in the early 1960s.
- Lincoln Terrace public housing project was built in 1952.
- In 1954, Burrell Hospital was built. The hospital was the first in the valley for the black community.
- The Britewood apartment complex, now known as Afton Apartments, was developed in 1970.
- Hunt Manor was developed in 1974.
- Brown-Robertson Park was established in 2002.

Population

The population in the area increased between 1990 and 2000. In addition, the area also had an increase in households. The study area experienced an increase in black residents and residents of other races, while white residents decreased by 17%. The area also experienced substantial increases in the number of younger and middle age populations, while the number of younger adults and the elderly decreased.

To compare demographic changes between 1990 and 2000, census tract level information had to be used. However, the census tracts do not match neighborhood boundaries and include substantial portions of surrounding areas. The chart below compares the same census tracts in both 1990 and 2000.

Population Trends 1990-2000			
	1990	2000	% change
Total Population	5,719	5,976	+4.5%
Racial Distribution			
White	709	587	-17%
Black	4,968	5,193	+4.5%
Other races & multiracial	42	193	+359%
Age Distribution			
0-17 years old	1,485	1,776	+20%
18-34 years old	1,523	1,185	-22%
34-65 years old	1,788	2,205	+23%
65 years +	923	824	-11%
Households	2,230	2,439	+9.4%
Source: US Census Bureau			

A more accurate count is provided by looking at census blocks, which are small portions of census tracts. In the year 2000, the population of the Harrison and Washington Park neighborhoods was 2,273, about 2.4% of Roanoke's population. The area has a predominantly black population. The largest age bracket is 35-64. In the Harrison neighborhood, the population is 1,019, with 393 households, and in Washington Park, the population is 1,254, with 531 households. Census data indicate the following trends:

- Minority populations are increasing
- Increases in youth and middle age brackets
- Large youth population

Population Characteristics			
	Harrison/ Washington Park	Neighborhood Percentage	Percentage for Roanoke
Total Population	2,273	n/a	n/a
Racial Distribution			
White	1,921	84%	27%
Black	271	12%	69%
Other races & multiracial	81	4%	4%
Age Distribution			
0-17 years old	670	29%	23%
18-34 years old	459	20%	23%
34-65 years old	788	35%	38%
65 years +	356	16	16%
Households	924	n/a	n/a
Source: US Census Bureau			